



**Montana Fish,
Wildlife & Parks**

PO Box 200701 Helena, MT 59620-0701
(406) 444-9947

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

PART I. PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION

1. Project Title: Chinook Rod and Gun Club

2. Type of Proposed Action:

- Create a competitive trap range
- Install perimeter fencing for the entire range
- Provide handicap-accessible shooting facilities
- Install signage to label each range and to list safety regulations
- Install a toilet with a handicap accessible sidewalk

3. Location Affected by Proposed Action:

The Chinook Rod and Gun Club is located on 80 acres in Blaine County 3.4 miles southeast of Chinook, Montana on Clear Creek Road, Lat. 48.54889, Long. -109.31111, Section 7, T32N, R19E.

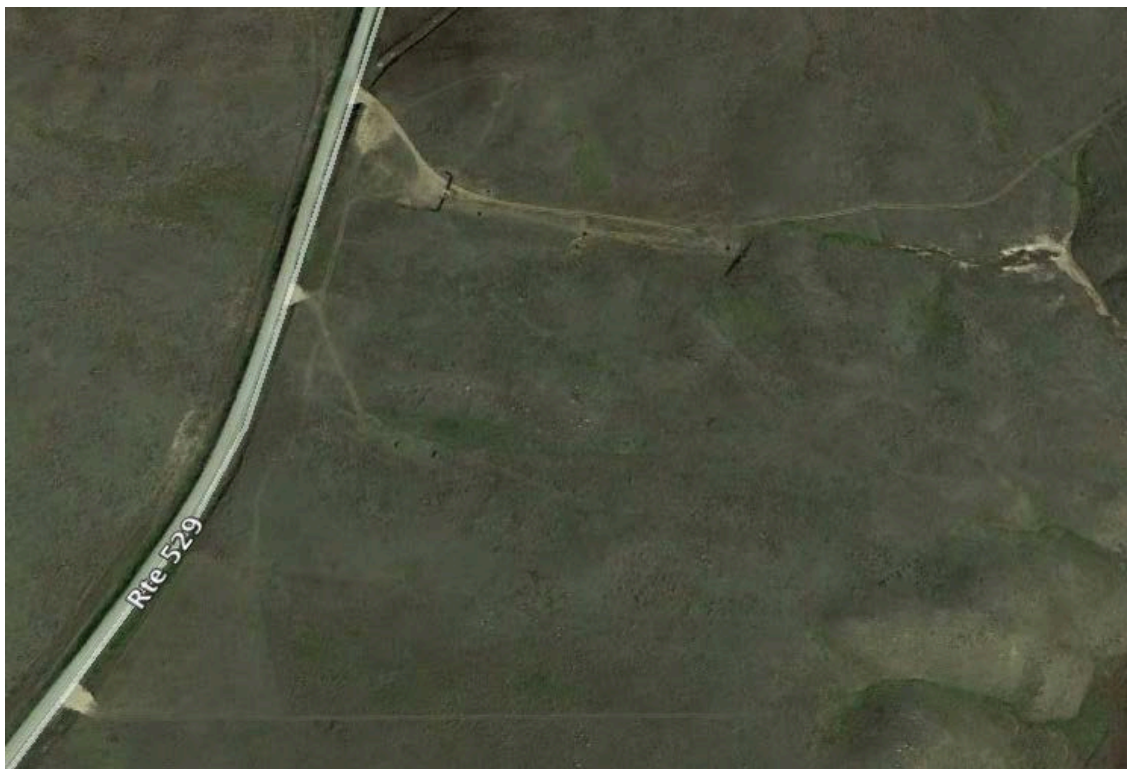


Figure 1. Chinook Rod and Gun Club Range, Chinook, Montana.



Figure 2. Proposed Project Area for the Chinook Rod and gun Club Range

4. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action: MCA 87-1-276 through 87-1-279 (Legislative established policies and procedures for the establishment and improvement of shooting ranges) and MCA 87-2-105 (Departmental authority to expend funds to provide training in the safe handling and use of firearms and safe hunting practices). The Montana Legislature has authorized funding for the establishment of a Shooting Range Development Program providing financial assistance for the development of shooting ranges. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) has responsibility for the administration of the program, including the necessary guidelines and procedures governing applications for funding assistance under the program.

To be eligible for grant assistance, a private shooting club or a private organization:

- (a)(i) Shall accept in its membership any person who holds or is eligible to hold a Montana hunting license and who pays club or organization membership fees;*
- (ii) May not limit the number of members;*
- (iii) may charge a membership fee not greater than the per-member share of the club's or organization's reasonable cost of provision of services, including establishment, improvement, and maintenance of shooting facilities and other membership services; and*
- (iv) shall offer members occasional guest privileges at no cost to the member or invited guest and shall make a reasonable effort to hold a public sight-in day each September, when the general public may use the shooting range for a day-use fee or at no cost; or*
- (b) Shall admit the general public for a reasonable day-use fee.*

5. Need for the Action(s):

As a relatively new shooting range, the Chinook Rod and Gun Club Range does not have any trap shooting facilities. Club members and the local community would like to have a trap range available for weekly trap shoots and other trap shooting functions. The club members would also like to be able to provide handicap accessibility to handicapped shooters. Surrounding the range with a perimeter fence is important to provide for public safety, to protect livestock, and to mark the property boundaries. Because each section of the range is separated by hills, it is important to install signs to label each range as well as list range use and safety regulations. In order to provide comfortable and convenient facilities, it is necessary to provide handicap-accessible sanitation facilities.

The proposed funding will contribute to the long-term safety, convenience, and usefulness of the facility for the club members, the local community, and the general public. .

6. Objectives for the Action(s):

The 2014 goal for the Chinook Rod and Gun Club is to create a competitive trap range, to install a safe range perimeter fence, to provide handicap-accessible shooting and sanitation facilities, and to install directional and regulatory signs.

7. Project Size: estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected:

Of the total 80 acres, the proposed trap range will involve approximately seven acres. The perimeter fence would enclose the entire 80-acre range.

8. Affected Environment (A brief description of the affected area of the proposed project):

The 80-acre Chinook Rod and Gun Club Range is located on private land with a 25-year lease for the entire 80 acres. The land is not within or adjacent to any floodplain. There are no permanent surface waters or wetlands on the property. Waterways on the property comprise only intermittent seasonal runoff.

9. Description of Project:

1. Construct a trap range, including a Pat Trap thrower, pill box, concrete shooting runs, and handicap sidewalks joining the parking lot to the shooting runs.	\$26,150
2. Perimeter fencing, including fencing on the sides and back of the 80-acre parcel. The boundary along the highway and parking lots are already fenced and has metal gates to enter the range and shooting areas.	\$10,230
3. Metal cut-out signs would be installed for the range names and vinyl signs would be used for safety regulations and emergency contact information	\$ 2,400
4. Install a handicap-accessible toilet at the trap range, including a handicap-accessible sidewalk leading to the toilet and a concrete handicap parking space.	\$12,016
5. Miscellaneous grant administration	\$ 580
Total Budget for the Proposed Project	\$51,376
Total FWP Funding Requested	\$25,688
Funding FWP Approved	\$25,688

10. List any Other Local, State, or Federal Agency that has Overlapping or Additional Jurisdiction:

None

Permits, Licenses and/or Authorizations:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Permit</u>	<u>Date Filed/#</u>
N/A		

Funding:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	\$25,688

11. Affiliations, Cooperating Agencies, User Groups and/or Supporting Groups:

The Chinook Rod and Gun Club Range is located on 80 acres of exclusively private land leased to the Chinook Rod and Gun Club. To date, this is a public range though there have been discussions of creating a private range if vandalism becomes a problem. User fees will be charged for the new trap range.

Organizations that have used the range in the past or have requested to use the range in 2014 include: 4H Shooting Sports, Bullhook Black Powder, Insight Target Operators, Chinook Rod and Gun Club, Chinook Police, Blaine County Sheriff Department, Adult Education Women's Handgun Class, and FWP Hunter Education.

12. History of the Planning and Scoping Process, and Any Public Involvement:

The Chinook Rod and Gun Club Range is a public, non-profit range operated and maintained by the Chinook Rod and Gun Club. Because it is currently a public range, there has been public involvement in the planning process. Proposed range improvement proposals have been discussed with the club members and the associated project vendors and contractors.

13. List of Agencies Consulted/Contacted During Preparation of the EA:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

14. Names, Address, and Phone Number of Project Sponsor:

Mischelle Fisher, P.O. Box 13, Chinook, MT 59523. (406) 390-4645.

15. Other Pertinent Information:

Though the Chinook Rod and Gun Club is a private, non-profit organization, the Chinook Rod and Gun Club Range is a public, non-profit range operated and maintained by the Chinook Rod and Gun Club. The range is located southwest of Chinook and serves Chinook as well as smaller communities within easy driving distance of the range. The majority of members reside in or around Chinook. The closest range with similar shooting opportunities is 27 miles away in Havre, Montana.

Shooting range applications require the participating governing body to approve by resolution its submission of applications for shooting range-funding assistance. Resolution Date: April 30, 2014.

PART II. IDENTIFICATION OF THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES

Alternative A, the **Proposed Alternative**, and **Alternative B**, the **No Action Alternative**, were considered.

- **Alternative A (Proposed Alternative)** is as described in Part I, paragraph 9 (Description of Project): to construct a handicap-accessible trap range, install a handicap-accessible toilet at the trap range, install perimeter fencing, and install directional and regulatory signage. There are beneficial consequences to acceptance of the **Proposed Alternative**.
- **Alternative B (No Action Alternative)** Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Shooting Range Development Grant money would be denied and the area will remain as an active shooting range without the proposed improvements. The no action alternative would have no significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences. The range will continue on with present conditions. Land use would remain the same.

Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented: Only the proposed alternative and the no action alternative were considered. There were no other alternatives that were deemed reasonably available, nor prudent. Neither the proposed alternative nor the no action alternative would have significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences.

Describe any Alternatives considered and eliminated from Detailed Study:

None. Only the proposed alternative and the no action alternative were considered. There was no other alternative that was deemed reasonably available, or prudent. Neither the **Proposed Alternative** nor the **No Action Alternative** would have significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences.

List and explain proposed mitigating measures (stipulations):

None

PART III. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Abbreviated Checklist – The degree and intensity determines extent of Environmental Review. An abbreviated checklist may be used for those projects that are not complex, controversial, or are not in environmentally sensitive areas.

Table 1. Potential impact on physical environment.

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources				X		
2. Terrestrial or aquatic life and/or habitats				X		#2
3. Introduction of new species into an area				X		
4. Vegetation cover, quantity & quality				X		
5. Water quality, quantity & distribution (surface or groundwater)				X		#5
6. Existing water right or reservation				X		
7. Geology & soil quality, stability & moisture				X		
8. Air quality or objectionable odors				X		#8
9. Historical & archaeological sites				X		#9
10. Demands on environmental resources of land, water, air & energy				X		

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
11. Aesthetics				X		

2. & 5. There are no delineated wetlands and no natural water sources within the area proposed for development. No critical wildlife habitat would be affected. Any resident or transient wildlife may leave the immediate area during road re-surfacing activity.

8. Minor and temporary dust and vehicle emissions would be created during construction of the handicap-accessible trap range, installation of a handicap accessible toilet with sidewalk, installation of perimeter fencing, and installation of directional and regulatory signs. However, the construction time is short and human effects will be limited due to the sparse population in the surrounding area.

9. This project uses no federal funds nor does it take place on state owned or controlled property; therefore, the Federal 106 Regulations and the State Antiques Act do not apply.

Table 2. Potential impacts on human environment.

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Social structures and cultural diversity				X		
2. Changes in existing public benefits provided by wildlife populations and/or habitat				X		
3. Local and state tax base and tax revenue				X		
4. Agricultural production				X		
5. Human health				X		#5
6. Quantity & distribution of community & personal income				X		
7. Access to & quality of recreational activities				X		#7
8. Locally adopted environmental plans & goals (ordinances)				X		

9. Distribution & density of population and housing				X		
10. Demands for government services				X		
11. Industrial and/or commercial activity				X		

5. The proposed installation of perimeter fencing and informational and regulatory signs would improve the safety for members and the public using the range.

7. The proposed improvements to the Chinook Rod and Gun Club range will improve the quality and safety of the shooting sports within the community.

PART IV. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

All of the pertinent or potential impacts of the project have been reviewed, discussed, and analyzed. None of the project reviewed were complex, controversial, or located in an environmentally sensitive area. The projects being implemented are already on an existing range or altered areas that together with the insignificant environmental effects of the proposed action, indicates that this should be considered the final version of the environmental assessment. There are no significant environmental or economic impacts associated with the proposed alternative.

The Gallatin Shooting Clays Associations' Proposed Alternative, to provide a safe, regulated shooting opportunity, is supported by its members and the public. Therefore, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks should approve the Proposed Alternative (A) for the improvements as outlined in Part I, Paragraph 9.

PART V. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Does the proposed action involve potential risks or adverse effects, which are uncertain but extremely harmful if they were to occur?

No

Does the proposed action have impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant? Individually, the proposed actions have minor impacts. However, it was determined that there are no significant or potentially significant cumulatively impacts. Cumulative impacts have been assessed considering any incremental impact of the proposed action when they are combined with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, and no significant impacts or substantially controversial issues were found. There are no extreme hazards created with this project and there are no conflicts with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan.

Recommendation and justification concerning preparation of EIS:

There are no significant environmental or economic impacts associated with the proposed alternative; therefore, an EIS is not required.

PART VI. EA CONCLUSION SECTION

Individuals or groups contributing to, or commenting on, this EA:

- Mischelle Fisher, P.O. 13, Chinook, MT 59523. (406) 390-4645
- MT Fish Wildlife and Parks

EA prepared by:

Andrea Darling
Darling Natural Resource Consulting
Montana City, MT 59634

Date Completed:

August 22, 2014

Describe public involvement, if any:

This draft EA will be advertised on FWP's web site and through a legal ad in the ***Blaine County Journal News, in Chinook, MT*** announcing a public comment period. A press release will also announce the project and comment period.